

Washington, D.C. - A bipartisan group of U.S. Representatives today said they will launch a new Congressional caucus to reform sugar subsidies.

Led by Reps. Mark Kirk, Danny Davis, Phil Crane and Clay Shaw, the Congressional Sugar Reform Caucus will promote alternative sugar policies that protect the interests of workers, consumers, taxpayers and the environment.

"Current sugar policy is a mess," said Kirk (R-IL). "By keeping U.S. sugar prices two or three times as high as prices in the competitive world market, our policies not only distort markets and inflate consumer costs -- they also create a perverse incentive to move food-related jobs offshore to take advantage of lower costs for sugar there."

"Everyone agrees on the need to assist farmers," said Davis (D-IL). "But we shouldn't have to hurt workers in the process. Candy-related jobs have been moving out of Chicago and other cities, taking well-paid jobs with them. We need a sugar policy that's pro-farmer without being anti-worker."

Crane (R-IL), who chairs the Trade Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, said: "Protectionist sugar policies make it tougher for us to open up markets overseas. Other countries use our sugar policy as an excuse to keep their markets closed. American farmers who produce corn, soybeans, beef and pork for export markets get hurt by our misguided sugar program."

"Sugar subsidies also threaten the environment," said Shaw (R-FL). "Artificially high sugar prices create an incentive for more production in the middle of the Everglades, just where we don't need it."

Founding members of the Congressional Sugar Reform Caucus also include Reps. (LIST NAMES, PARTY AND STATE OF ALL CAUCUS MEMBERS). Additional caucus members will be announced soon as the caucus begins its work, which will involve both legislation and working closely with executive branch agencies.

Contact: Matt Towson
 847-940-0202
 cell: 773-454-5396